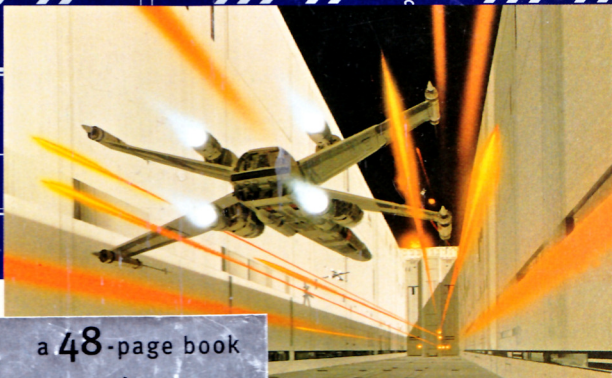


leader this is gold leader

THE ART OF RALPH MCQUARRIE

STAR WARS™

now let's b



INCLUDES

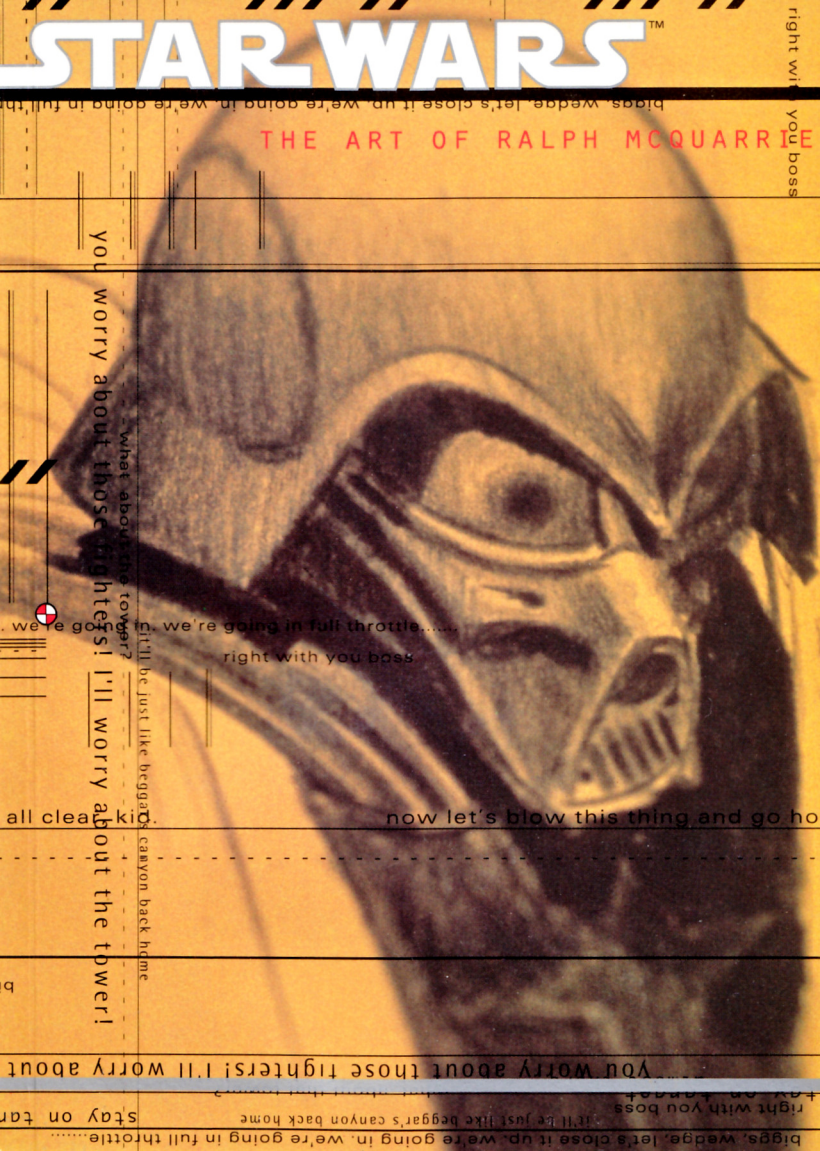
a 48-page book

15 postcards

6 collectible postage stamps



ARTBOX



STAR WARS™

THE ART OF RALPH MCQUARRIE

right with you boss

you worry about those tighters! I'll worry about the tower!

What about the tower?

it'll be just like beggar's canyon back home

right with you boss

all clear kid

now let's blow this thing and go home

You worry about those tighters! I'll worry about

stay on target

it'll be just like beggar's canyon back home

right with you boss

biggs, wedge, let's close it up, we're going in, we're going in full throttle.....

...let's close it up, we're going in, we're going in full throttle.....
it'll be just like the target
right with you boss

we
stay on target

on target.....almost there
you worry about those fighters! I'll worry about the tower!

stay on target...

you worry about those fighters! I'll worry about the tower!

BOSS
BOSS
BOSS

ing in

...this is gold leader, we're starting our attack run.

you worry about those

biggs, wedge, let's close it up, we're going in, we're going in full throttle

HIM GO! STAY ON THE LEADER!

IN THE LEADER I HAVE YOU NOW

old leader

biggs, wedge, let's close it up, we're going in, we're going in full throttle

STAR WARS

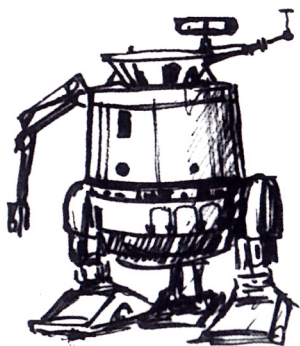
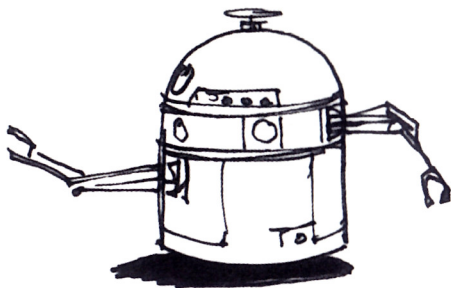
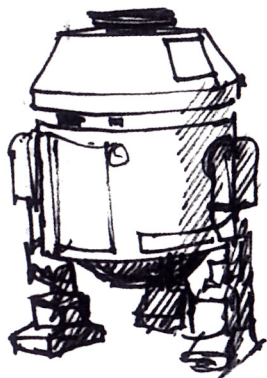
THE ART OF RALPH MCQUARRIE

INTERVIEW BY

KEVIN J. ANDERSON &

MICHAEL CARABETTA





Ralph McQuarrie's art and imagination have influenced popular culture worldwide in ways that only a handful of recent artists can claim, but his name doesn't immediately come to mind when compiling a list of the great masters of the 20th Century.

McQuarrie's work is familiar to everyone who saw the *Star Wars* trilogy, which ranks among the most popular motion pictures of all time. Serving as Lucasfilm's concept artist for *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi*, his guiding hand and artistic eye helped to make the *Star Wars* films look the way they do.

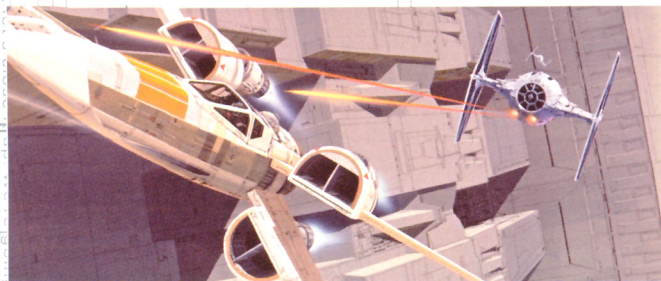
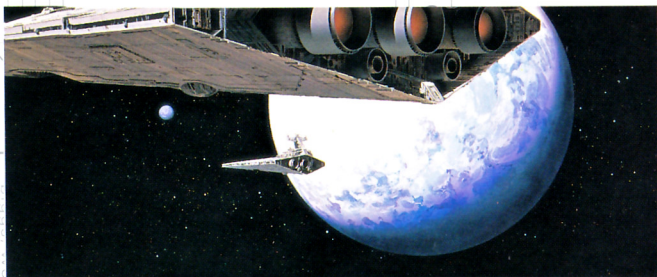
P. 3

McQuarrie says, "My main contributions were C-3PO and R2-D2, and Darth Vader and the stormtrooper costumes. Parts of the Death Star. Cloud City was based on my concepts in architecture. Jabba the Hutt's castle and his sail barge were based on my concepts."

The man who conceived of these science fiction icons recognized by all ages around the world had humble beginnings, dabbling with painting and drawing, but never perceiving himself as a great artist.

"I was born in Gary, Indiana, in 1929, the year the Depression hit. My parents pulled up stakes and came out West to hole up with the grandparents near Billings, Montana. As a boy, I played with toy soldiers and airplanes, building forts. I think it figured very much as far as my getting into *Star Wars*.

P. 4 "One of my teachers, a very fine watercolorist, looked at my drawings and thought I should be an artist, but that sounded way out of the realm of possibility. I didn't think I'd ever manage anything more than technical illustrations and I liked airplanes anyway. I started at the Boeing Company in Seattle in 1949 as a technical illustrator.



P. 5



stay on target... right with you boss... almost there... you worry about those fighters! I'll
 edge, we're close, we're going in... it'll be just like bigger's canyon back home... what about that too? I'll
 let's close it up, we're going in, we're going in full throttle.....



what about that tower? about those fighters! ill

ing in full throttle....

P. 6



you worry about those fighters!

what about that tower?

we're going in full throttle.....

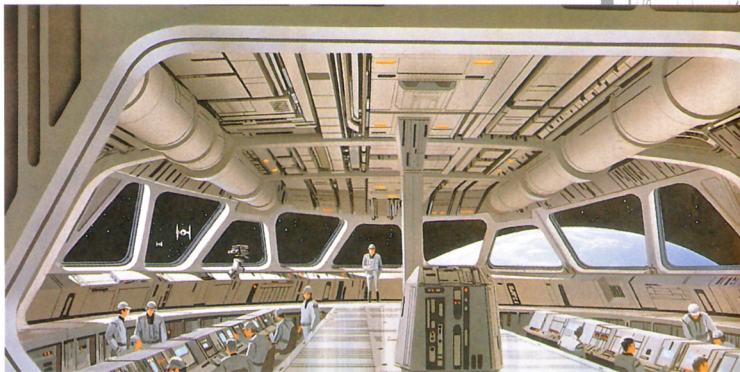
wedge, let's close it up. We're going in.



going in, we're going in full throttle



biggs



there
you worry about those fighters! I'll worry
about that too, but I'll worry about those fighters!

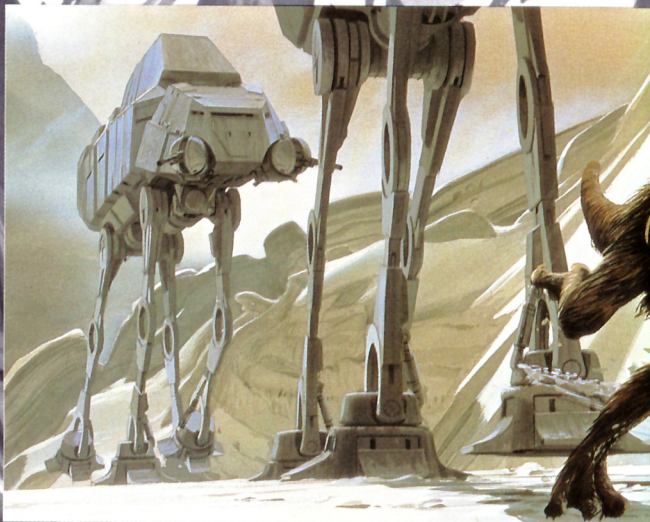
h. we're going in full throttle.....
it'll be just like biggs' canyon back home

wedge, I

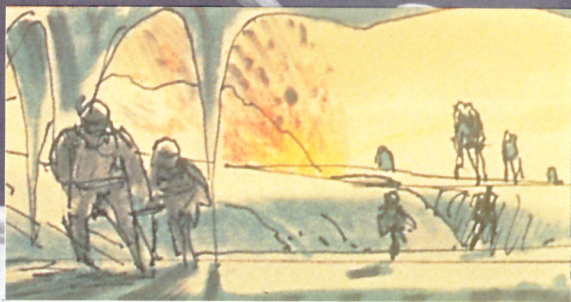
"I loved working there, and I met some interesting people who had been at the Art Center in LA. When I saw the paintings and drawings those guys were doing, I thought there was more to life than technical illustrating. So on the GI Bill I did five semesters at the Art Center."

Art school, however, did not live up to his expectations. "I saw a lot of wonderful artists developing there, but after five semesters I was beginning to wonder. I was very strict and harsh in my criticism toward myself, and I felt I was in over my head. I lost heart, so I dropped out and went back to technical illustration. But I didn't lose interest in art. I'd had enough drawing and painting to create a credible illustration of whatever I wanted to draw. I could draw things that I could imagine."

McQuarrie treats art as a profession rather than a calling, no mere messing with paints while waiting for the Muse to strike. He can take an assignment, a rendering,



P.10



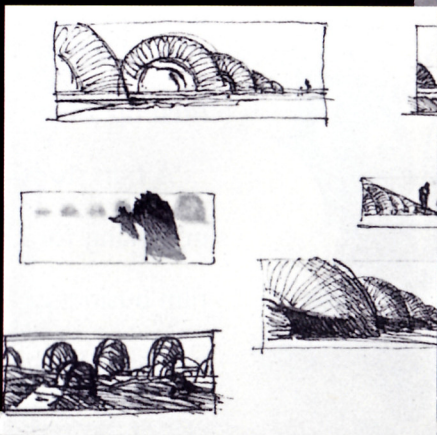
a vague set of instructions, and create a breathtaking sense of wonder.



"Many superb illustrators rely heavily on reference material, and they can make a gorgeous illustration," he says, "but if they don't have a good photograph to start with, they're lost. My work in the aircraft industry helped me develop my

skills as a sketch artist.

The engineers would dream up a new product, and my fellow artists and I would prepare drawings so we



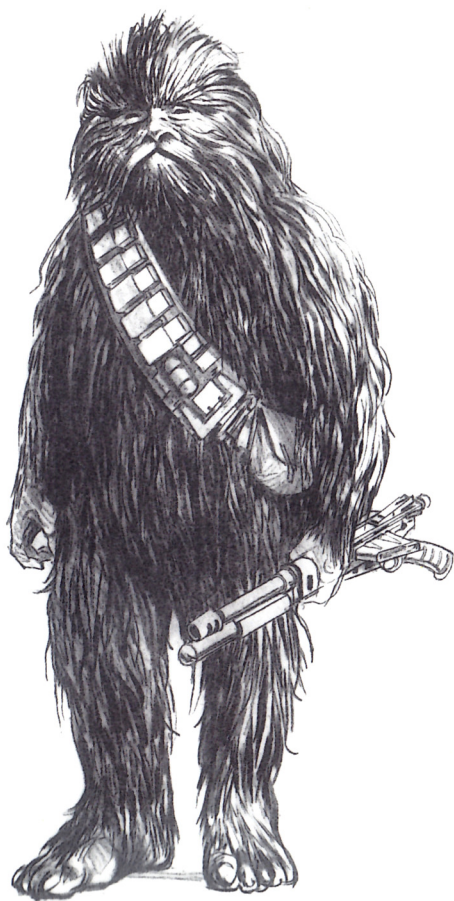
could rush a proposal off to the Pentagon. My artist's concepts had to be good enough that everybody could see how this thing looked and how it might function.

"I didn't know it at the time, but I was preparing for *Star Wars*. I was a creator of, a visualizer of other people's ideas. George Lucas had ideas he needed visualized—and he met me."

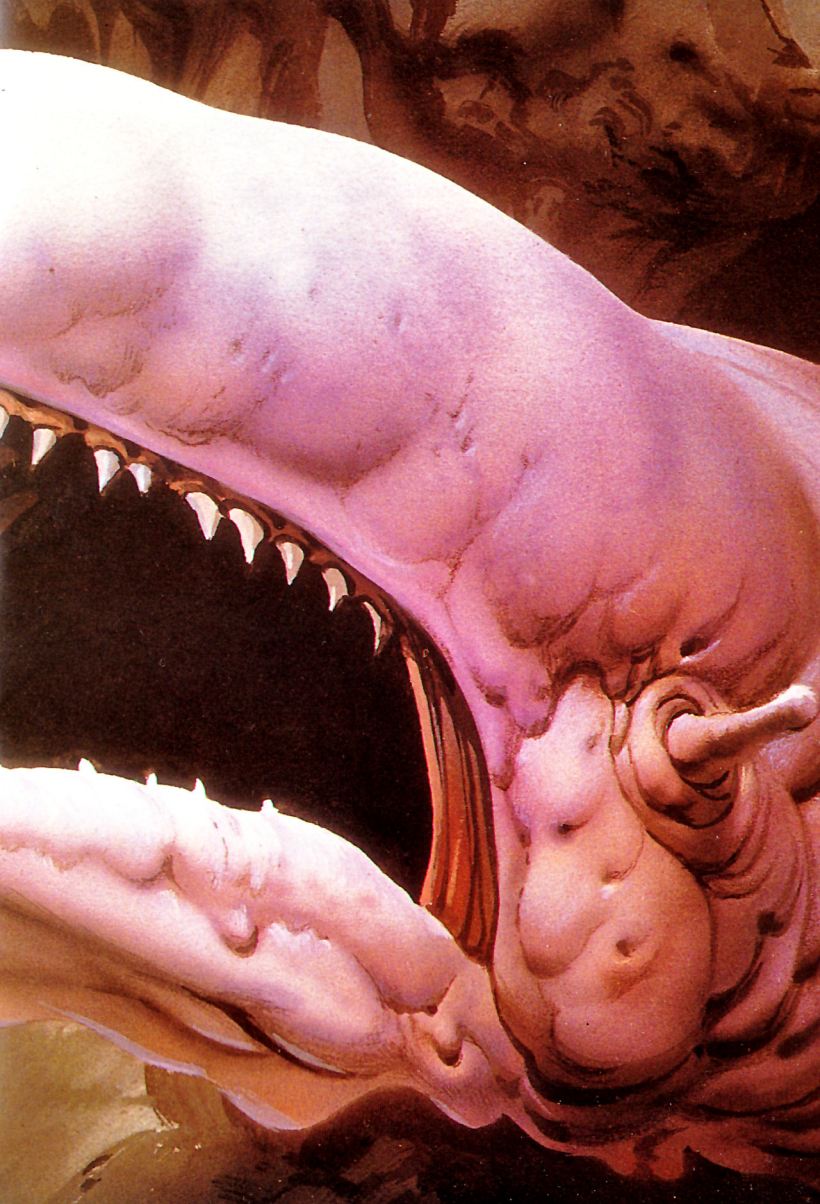
McQuarrie came to George Lucas' attention in a roundabout way. "I was working in a little shop that did animation for the Apollo flights, such as when the space capsules went around the back of the Moon and they fired up a burn to get into orbit.

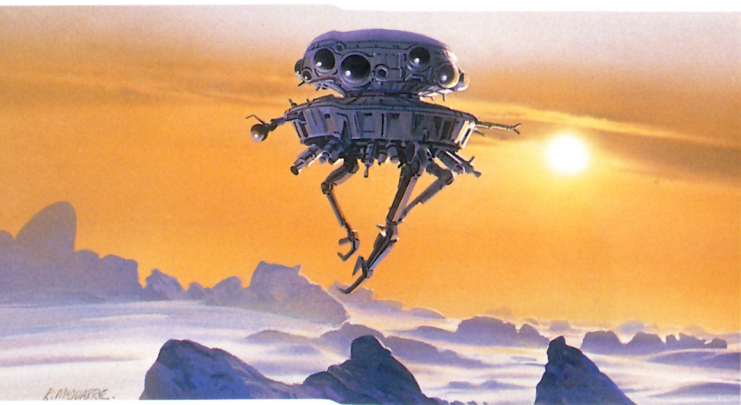
"A film student, Hal Barwood, came in looking for a way to get into the film business. Our shop didn't have anything for him, but Hal noticed my



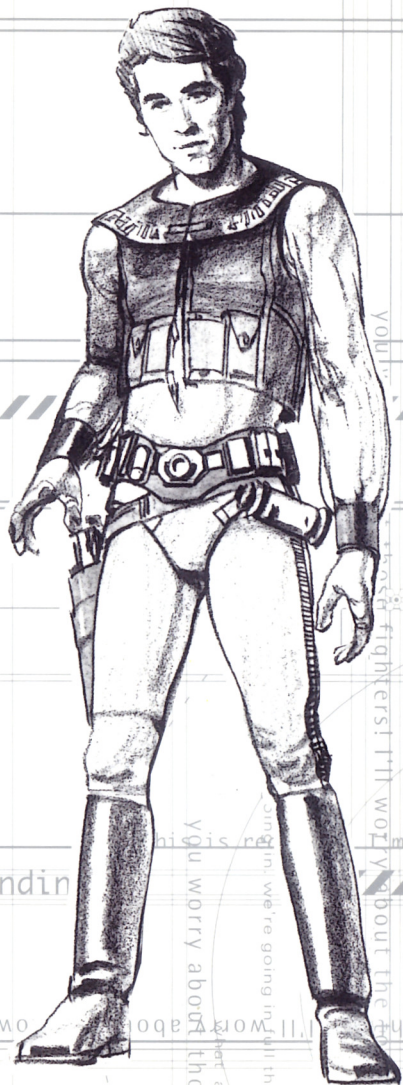


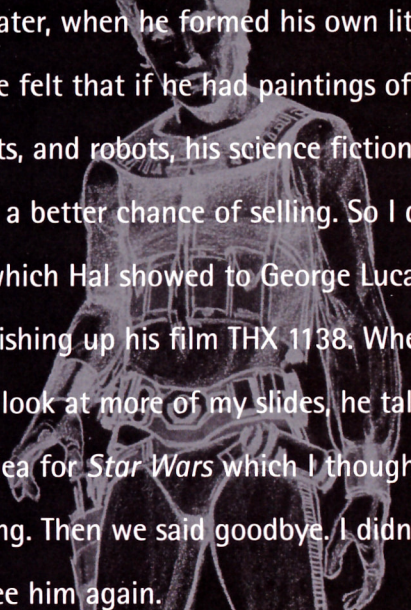






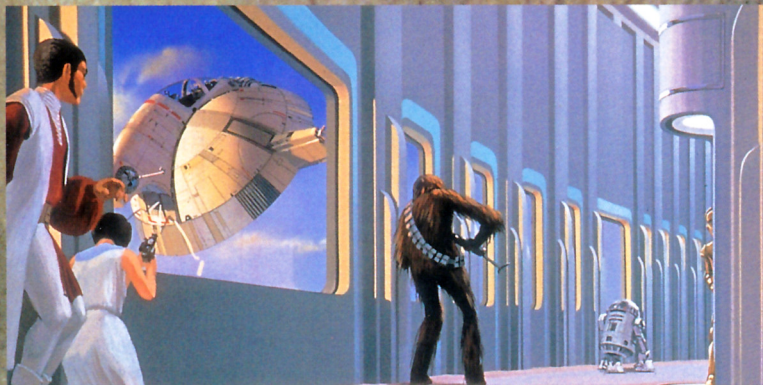






paintings. Later, when he formed his own little film company, he felt that if he had paintings of spacecraft, planets, and robots, his science fiction script would have a better chance of selling. So I did some paintings, which Hal showed to George Lucas, who was just finishing up his film THX 1138. When George came by to look at more of my slides, he talked about his idea for *Star Wars* which I thought sounded interesting. Then we said goodbye. I didn't really expect to see him again.

"But a couple of years went by, and George finished *American Graffiti*, then he came by to talk to me about working on his new film *The Star Wars*. George left a preliminary script and asked me to look through it and do pencil drawings of scenes I found interesting. I never was a big science fiction fan, but

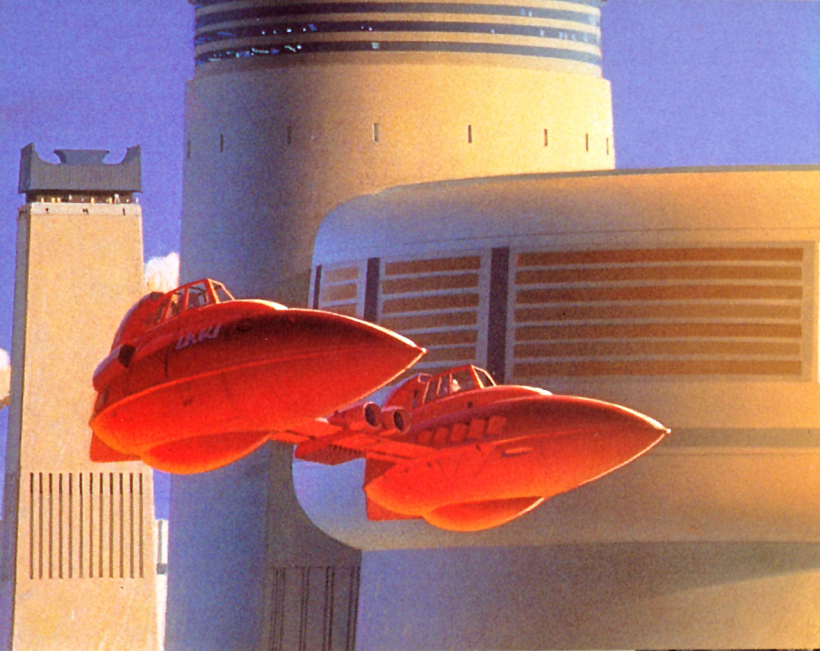


I don't think that hurt me at all, because I just went from my own imagination.

"To be honest, both he and I thought that what we were doing wouldn't necessarily be in the film. The aim was to develop enough material that George could take to Fox, where he was scheduled to pitch. Universal had turned down *The Star Wars* because they didn't believe there were enough science fiction fans to warrant spending so much money. But George felt—correctly—that they didn't quite grasp the nature of his film.



"We were both very free about doing anything to make the project look as wonderful as we could. From what I understand, my finished paintings were very important in Fox's decision to make the film."



P.22



ng in

this is gold leader, we're starting our attack run.

about those

worry about those fig

00000000

wedge, let's close it up, we're going in, we're going in full throttl



gold leader

you're all clear





McQuarrie considers his efforts with Lucas to be true interactive collaborations. "George gives his artists a minimum of words to get them started, then lets them go with whatever they dream up. Instead of telling them what to paint, what color to make it, he just says go ahead. He had gone through a lot of science illustrations and picked out things he liked. For instance, he said C-3PO could be like the robot from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, except a boy, and R2-D2 could be like the little robots in *Silent Running*, only with more personality.

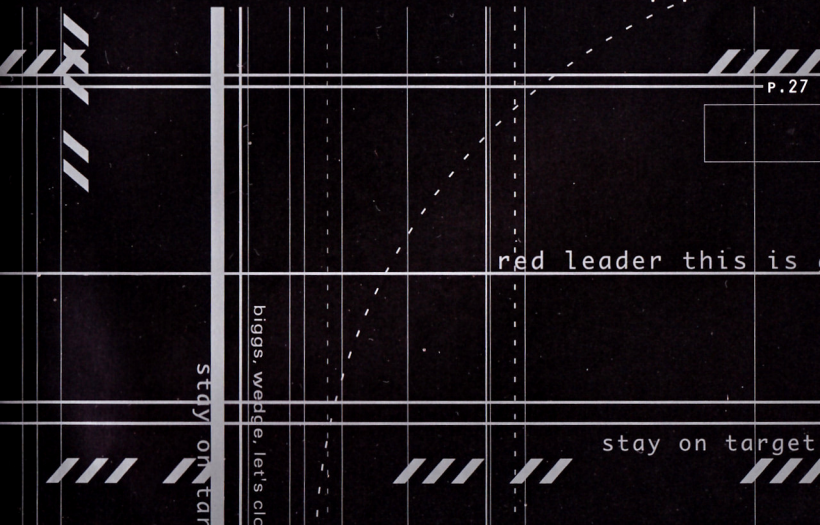
"George would look at our sketches and offer suggestions. 'I like that,' or maybe 'I think we need to work more on this.' The meetings would last about ten minutes. Everybody got to feel like they were contributing."

A good example is the evolution of the appearance



of Darth Vader. "George described him as a dark figure wrapped in black silk with a black cape and a big helmet like a Japanese warrior. Vader was supposed to burn through the plating and bust into a spacecraft from outer space. I said, 'Gee, George, Darth has to have a spacesuit on, doesn't he?' George told me to give him some kind of breathing mask, so that's how Darth came out looking as he does.

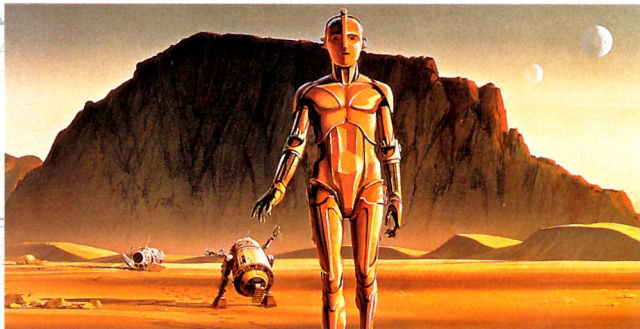
What impressed many upon seeing *Star Wars* for the first time was the "lived in" condition of the equipment.



"George did not want pristine NASA equipment built in a clean room—he wanted well-used items that were dirty where people scuffed them, dents and everything, paint bleached by the sun."

No matter how much preparation and care McQuarrie takes in his work, the real test comes when he finally gets a chance to see his own work on the screen. "Of course like every artist I look at it very critically," he says. "I learned that I shouldn't expect everything to look exactly the way I'd like it to look. I made my paintings and, if George liked them, they got used by the prop

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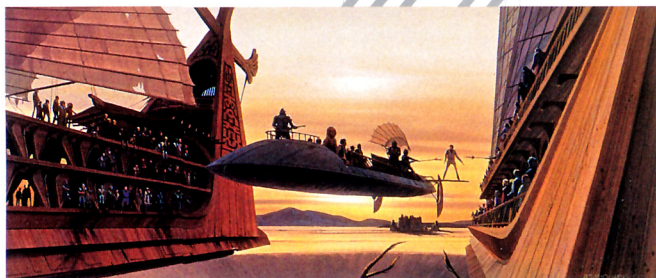
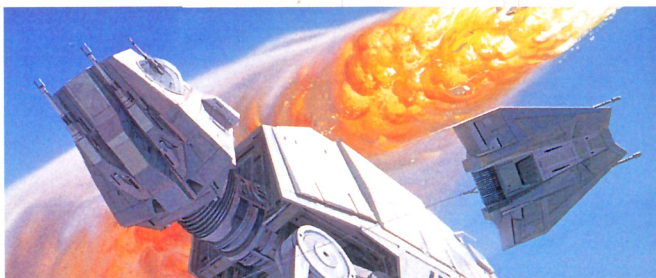
makers, the costume makers, and the set designers."

McQuarrie considers his contributions to *Star Wars* to be the highlight of his career so far. The work has opened many doors for him and his art, though he remains modest about his accomplishments and his skills. "*Star Wars* was the most fun, and the most important, and I think the best work that I've done.

On the basis of that background, my portfolios were published and the 'Art of *Star Wars*' volumes, and I was also given the chance to do book covers. It's nice

P. 34 to be published, complete with Library of Congress number, on stock that'll last a long time. You're remembered, and your work seems to have importance and some influence in the world."

When asked for his thoughts on computer animation today, McQuarrie still sees a place for artists like him-



you worry about those fighters? I'll worry about the tower!

P. 35

in full throttle. I'll worry about those fighters! I'll worry about the tower!

self who work with paint and paper. "I'm astounded at what computer animation can do. I was around Boeing in the 60s when animation was in its primitive beginnings. A lot of people like to work on the computer, but I can't see paper disappearing in the near future. To create a creature, for instance, most people still start on paper to rough out an idea before feeding it in the computer. It's a considerable amount of work to get a creature digitized. Once the computer knows every little rivulet and muscle, you can get a super realistic look . . . but you don't really *have it* like you do with a painting."

For his own pleasure McQuarrie likes to dabble with many ideas, building models, making things out of wood, odds and ends of furniture. He has even made wooden clock cases that have been exhibited in an art gallery in Carmel, California.

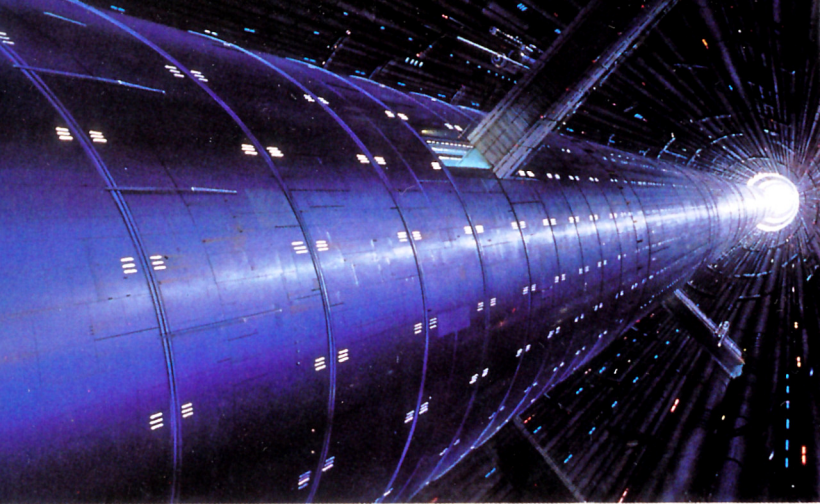
"I'll get started on some concept I really intend to do

something with—and then I have to go back to a film project or a book cover to earn money so I can continue my other work. But when I come back to my concept, I'm no longer sold on that idea, so I'm off on something else. I've never gotten into anything continuously enough to create my own art to sell.

"I go out to locations like Moonstone Beach up near Arcata and make photographs of these great big rocks, and I watch the light change during the day and the haze covering part of them. But then the little critical man inside my head says, 'Hey Ralph, you know that's not gonna get you anywhere.' I tell the voice to go away, but it comes right back every time I start something."

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The life of an artist is different for everyone, but in many ways always the same. "In so many buildings you see the light up there, and that's the artist working away," McQuarrie says. "They won't be satisfied with what



P. 38

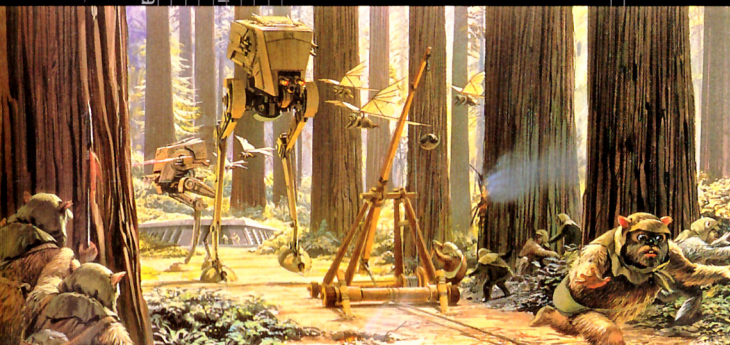




blow this thing and go home!

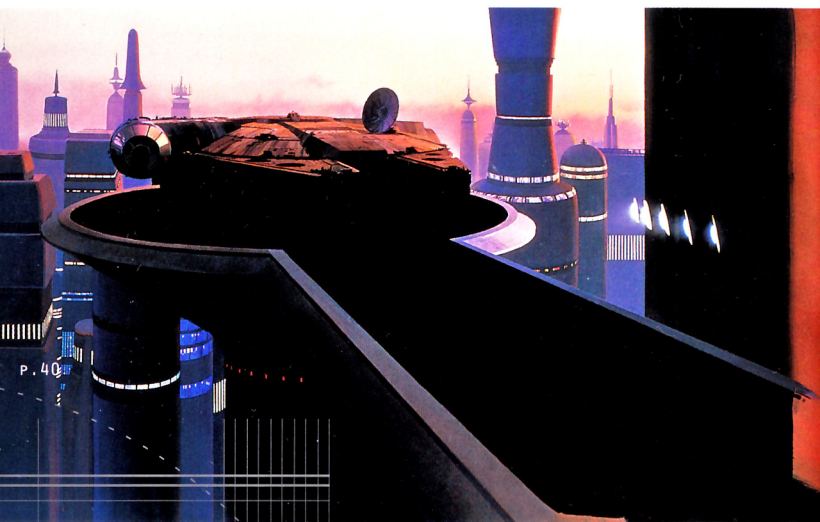
are going in. we're got
 you boss it'll be just
 almost there
 YOU worry a
 little.....

P.39



stay a
 worry a
 ng and go





P. 40

all clear, kid.

biggs, wedge, ter
stay on

they've got, so they need to continue working because the deadline's in the morning. Artists live on the excellence of their work, and they don't let it drop. You've got to have something you want to see and want to do—and get it done so that you *have it. Something.*"

Despite a career studded with many achievements and memorable highlights, McQuarrie is not certain what advice to offer young people interested in following his artistic footsteps. "I don't know where to start except having stuff in hand that you've done, and then being in a place where you can meet other people interested in what you do . . . and work on it. Get some kind of job that uses your skills, even if it's just in an advertising agency or printing shop. You need to be somewhere and do work, something you love, something to get you going.

"I've met people who want to jump right into the top job. They want to be a designer of films, or an illustrator—but most people don't jump right into top positions. The first job I had in film was on *Star Wars*, and my work was probably more published and more distributed than almost any other film artist I can think of. There've been other great film designers, but their work is rarely seen except in cute little books about film design way back on the shelves.

P. 42
"I didn't try. I was just there."

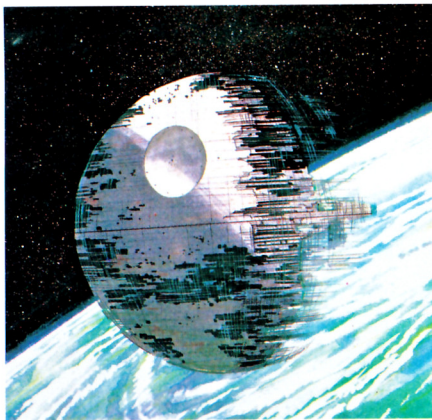
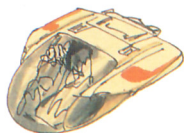
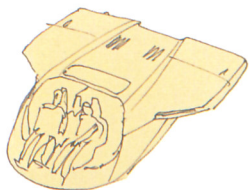
old leader

you're all clear, kid.

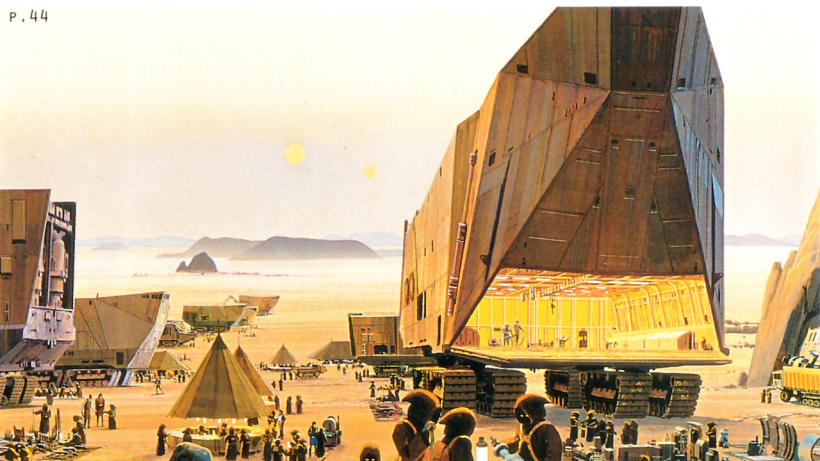
stay

biggs, wedg

now let's blow th



When asked whether he considers himself an *artist*, McQuarrie is quick to answer. "Commerciality has nothing to do with art. My paintings are 'sort of' art. A real artist wakes up and does what *he* wants, instead of what the client wants, the agent wants, the gallery wants, etc. I consider myself a craftsman, a draughtsman."

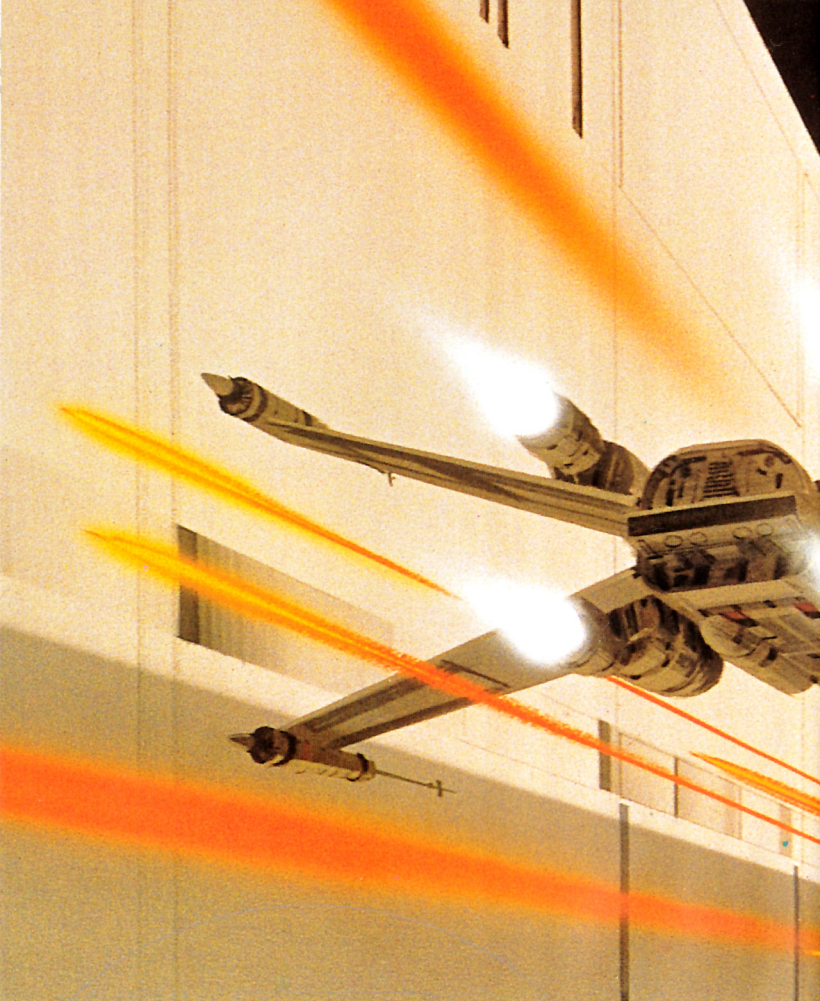


you worry about

it'll be just like

biggs wedge, let's close it up, we're going in





ggs/wedge, let's close it up. we're going in. we're going in full throttle.....
it'll be just like before. you've been around
you worry about those fighters!



P.47

I worry about the tower

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 P.46 REBEL X-WING IN DEATH STAR TRENCH, PRODUCTION PAINTING

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11

stay on, target

almost there
you worry about those fighters! I do worry about the tower!

2D2

~~stay~~ on target...

red six standing by

gold leader. we're starting our attack run.

You worry about those fighters! I'll worry about the

11

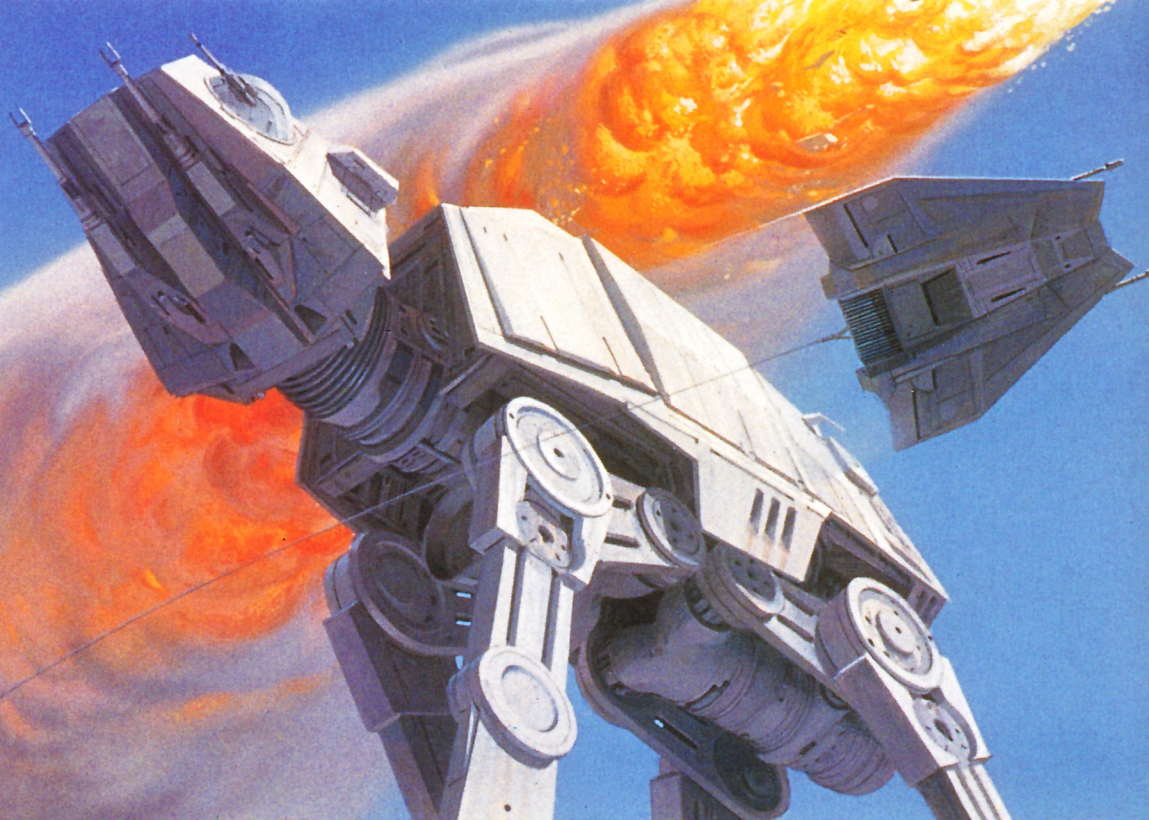
~~I can't shake him~~

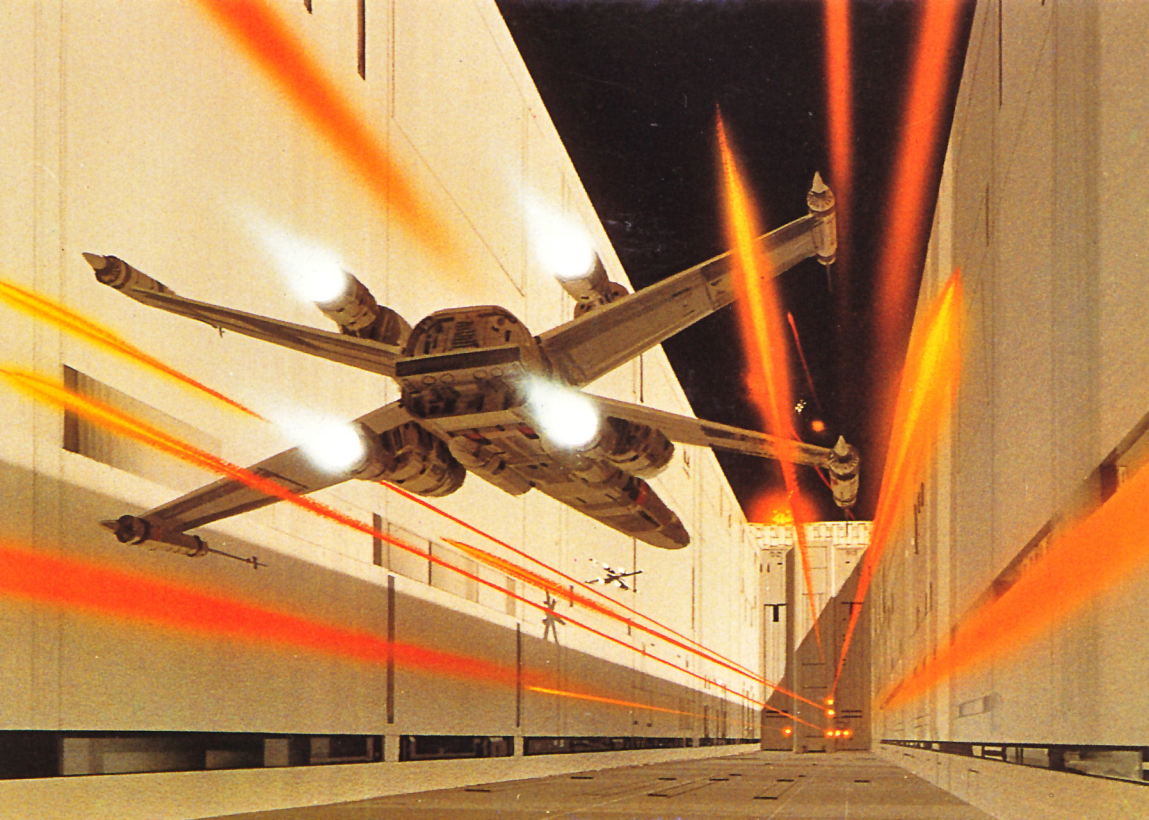
~~LET HIM GO! STAY ON THE LEADER!~~

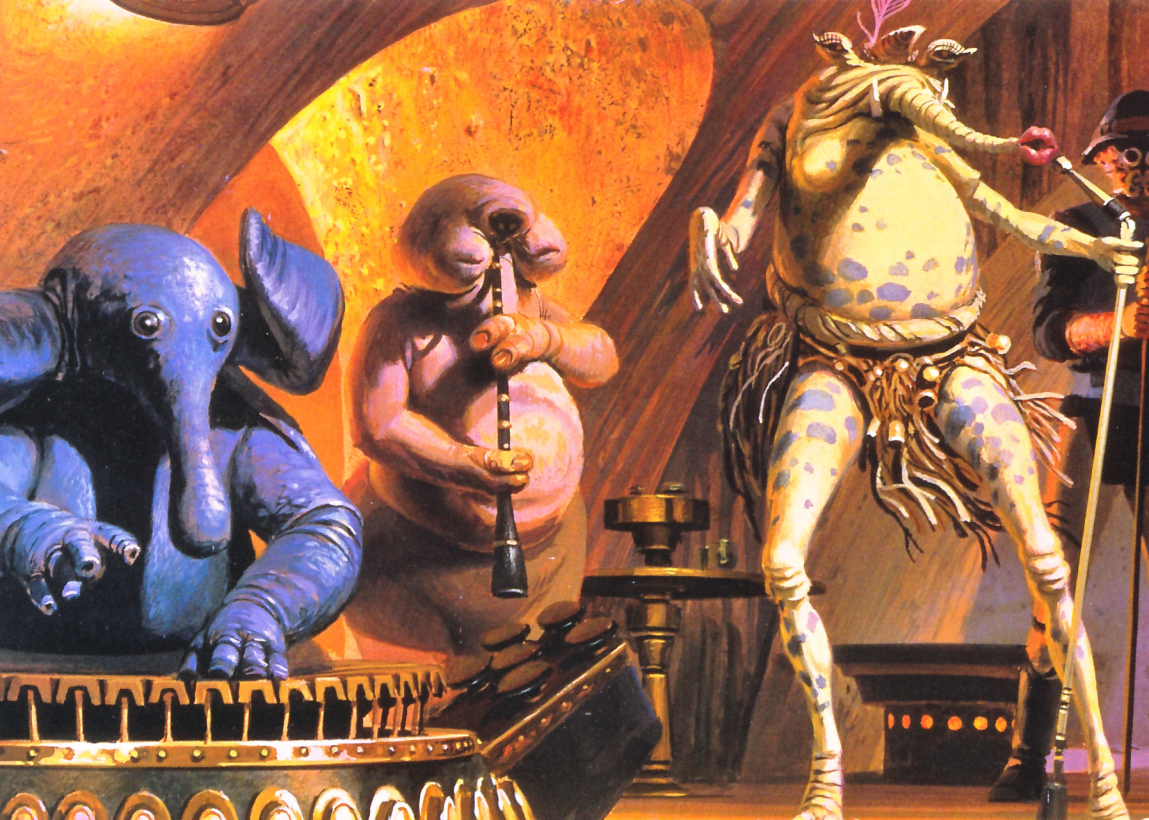
I'M ON THE LEADER. I HAVE YOU NOW

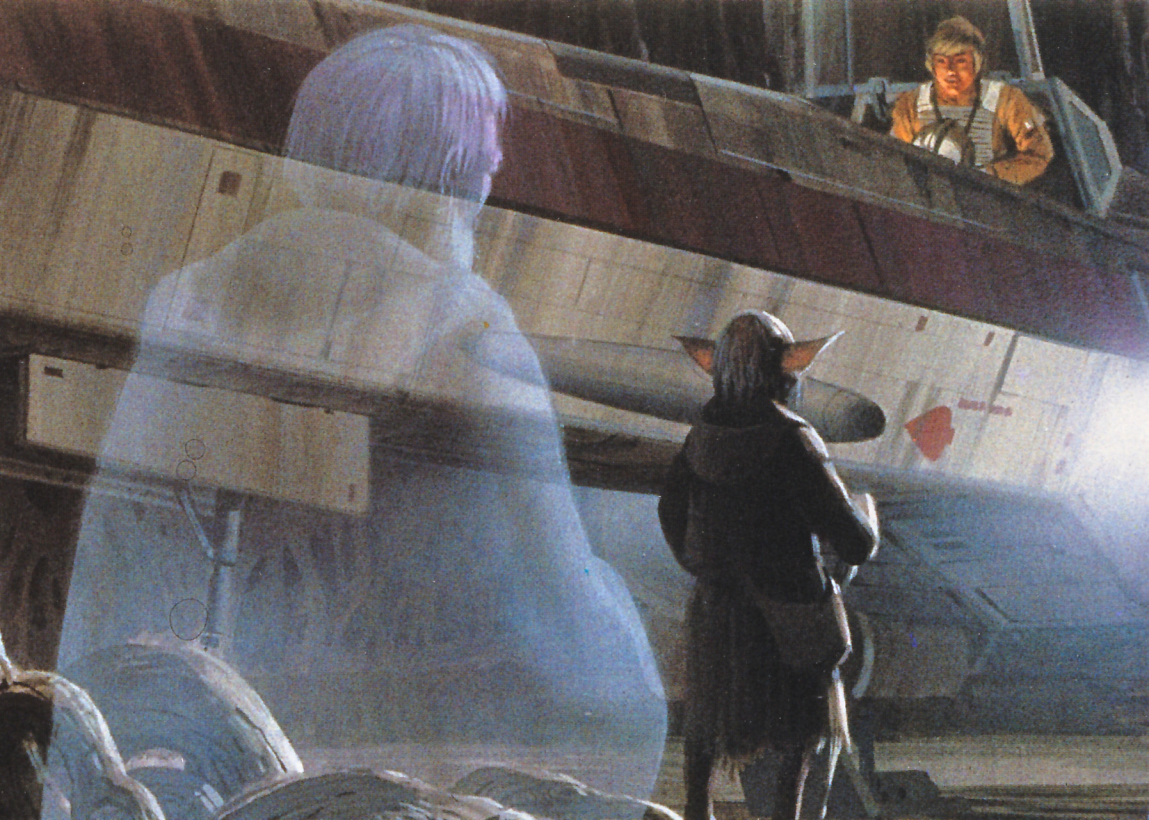
ed six standing by

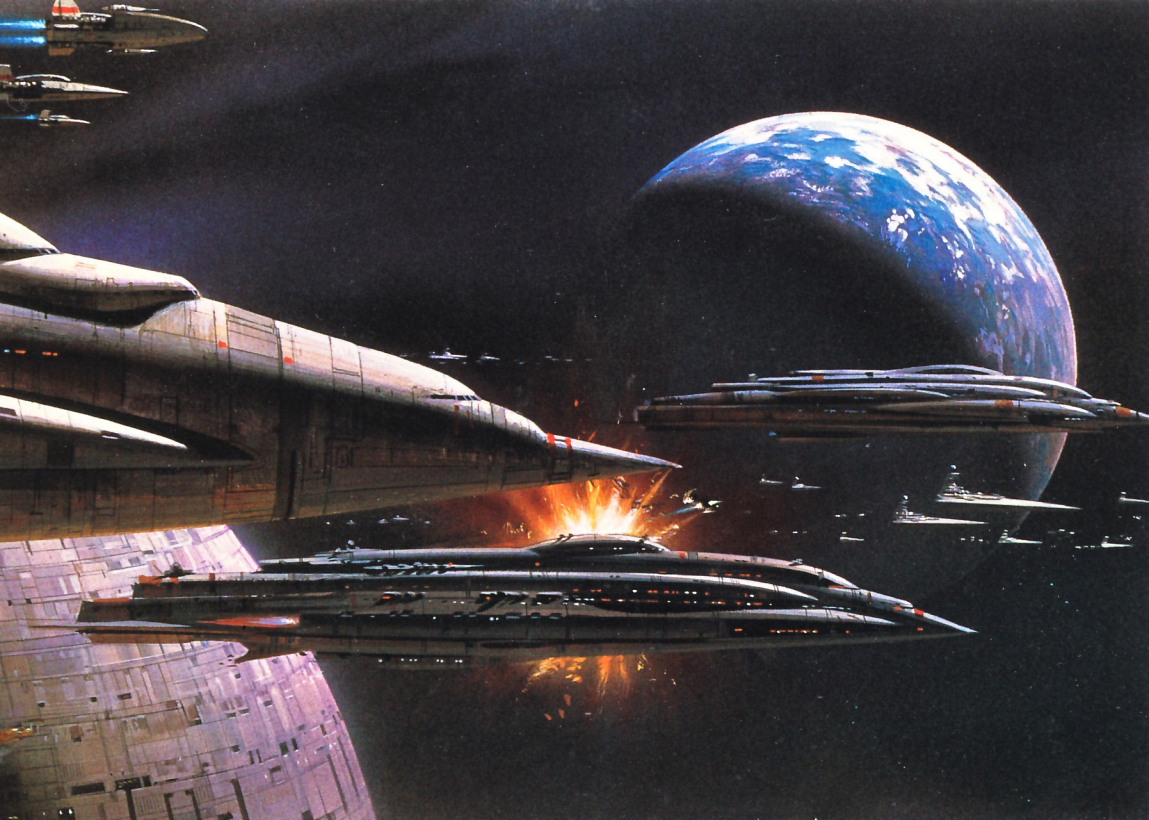
wedge, let's close it up. we're going in. we're going in full throttle.....



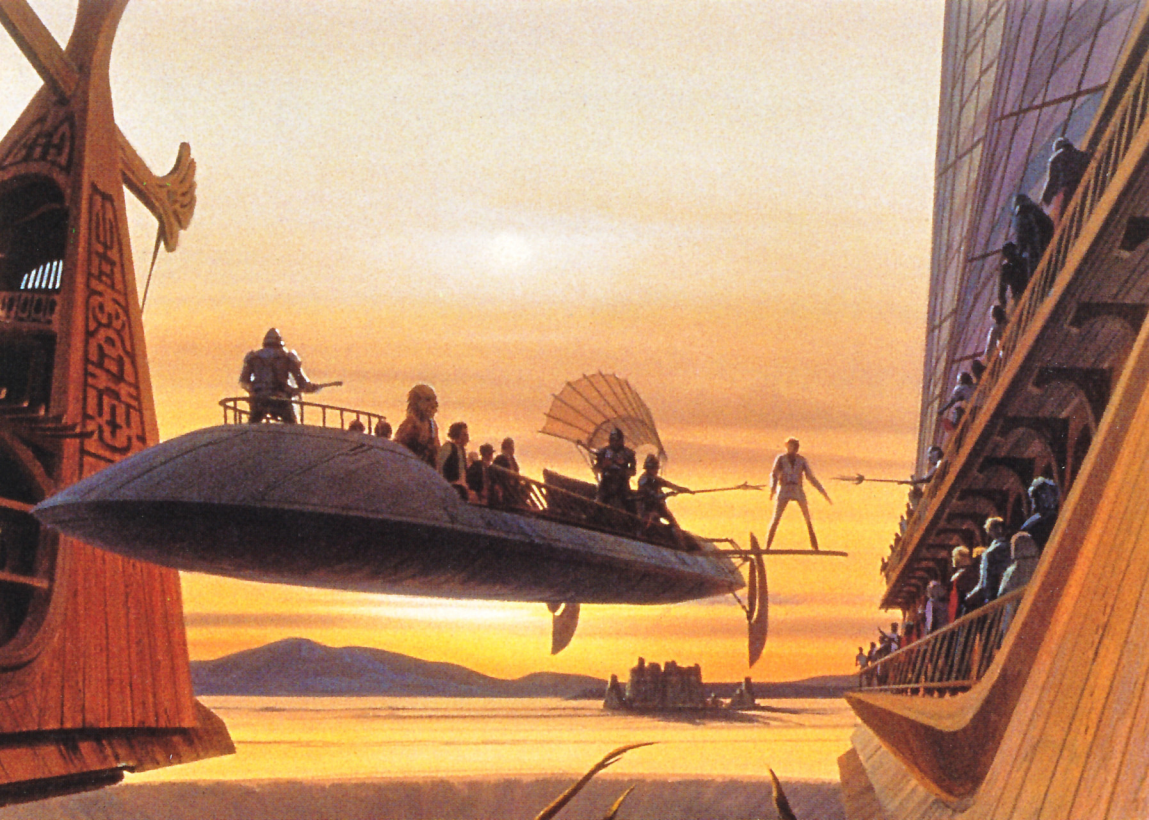


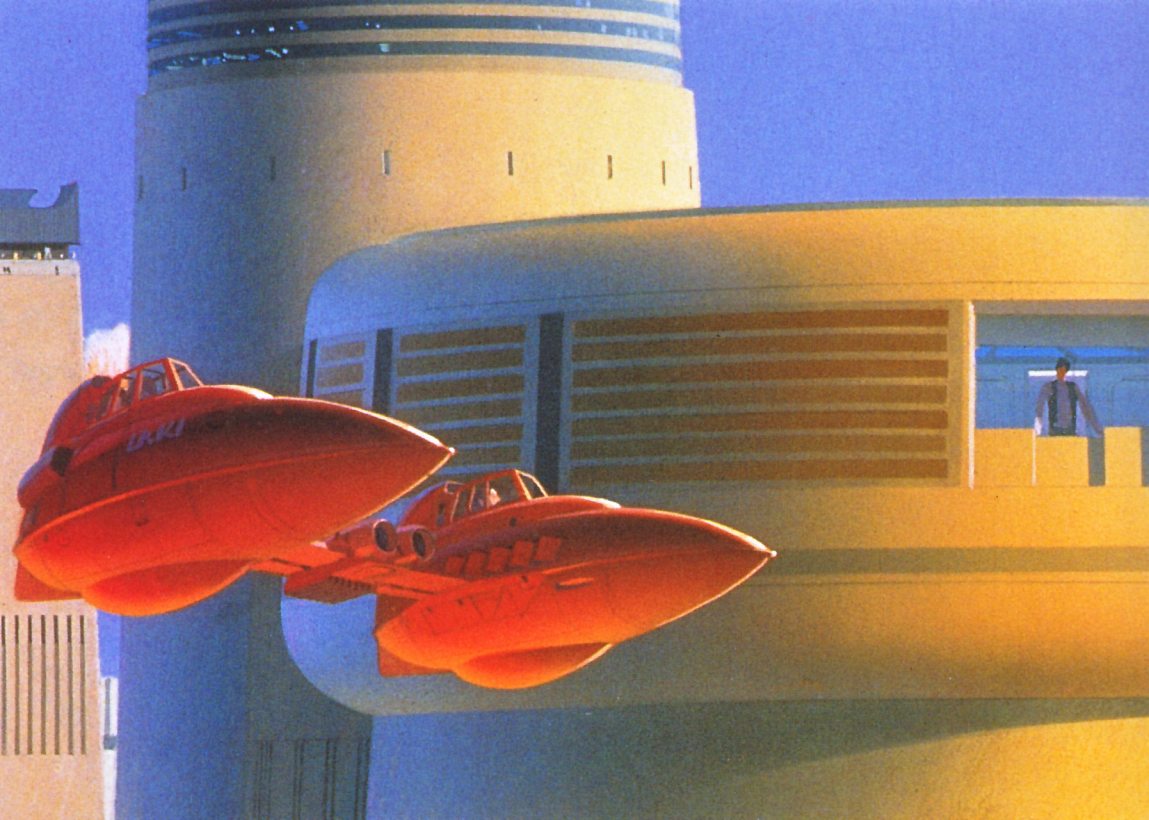


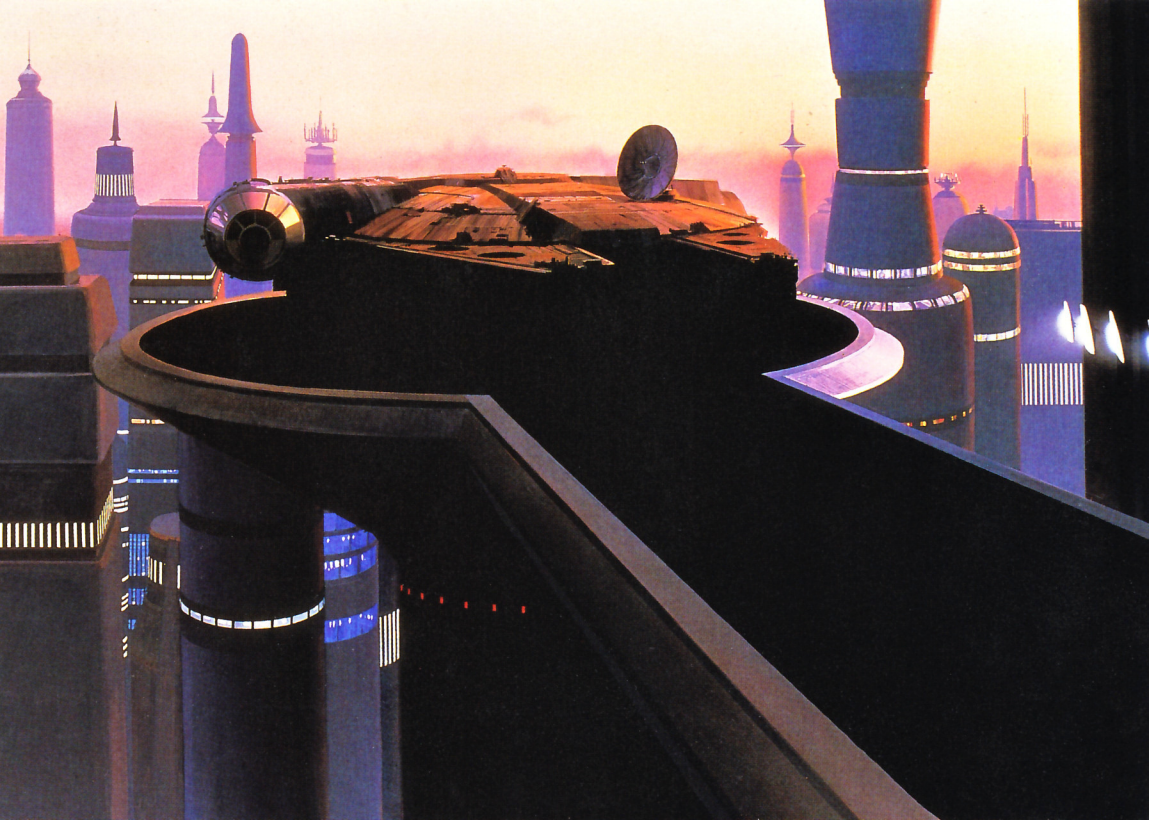


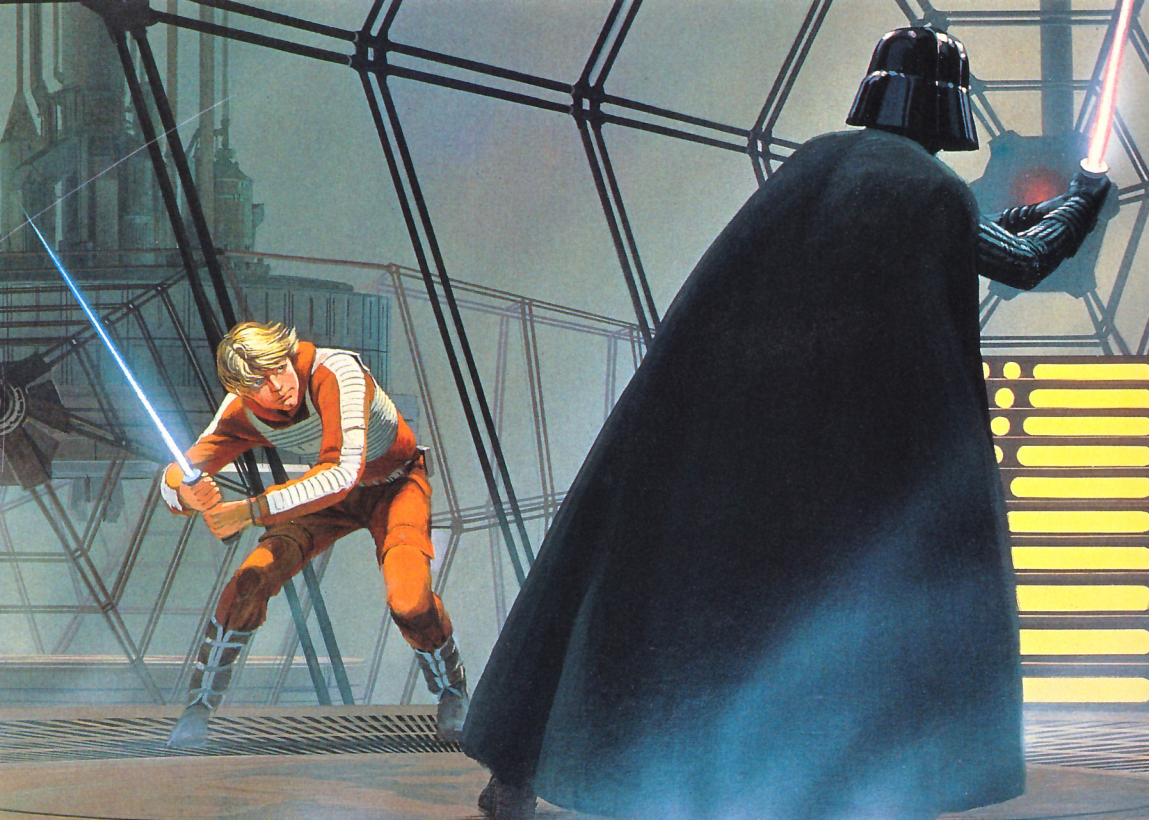


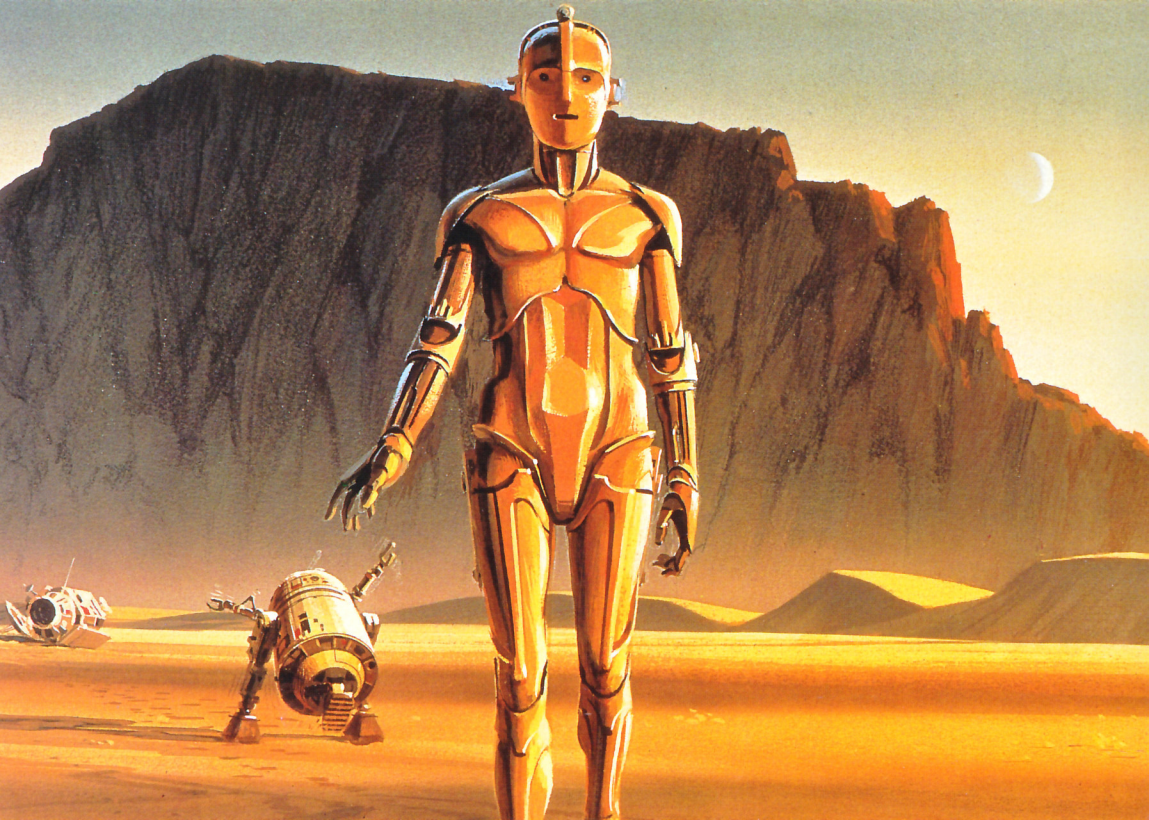




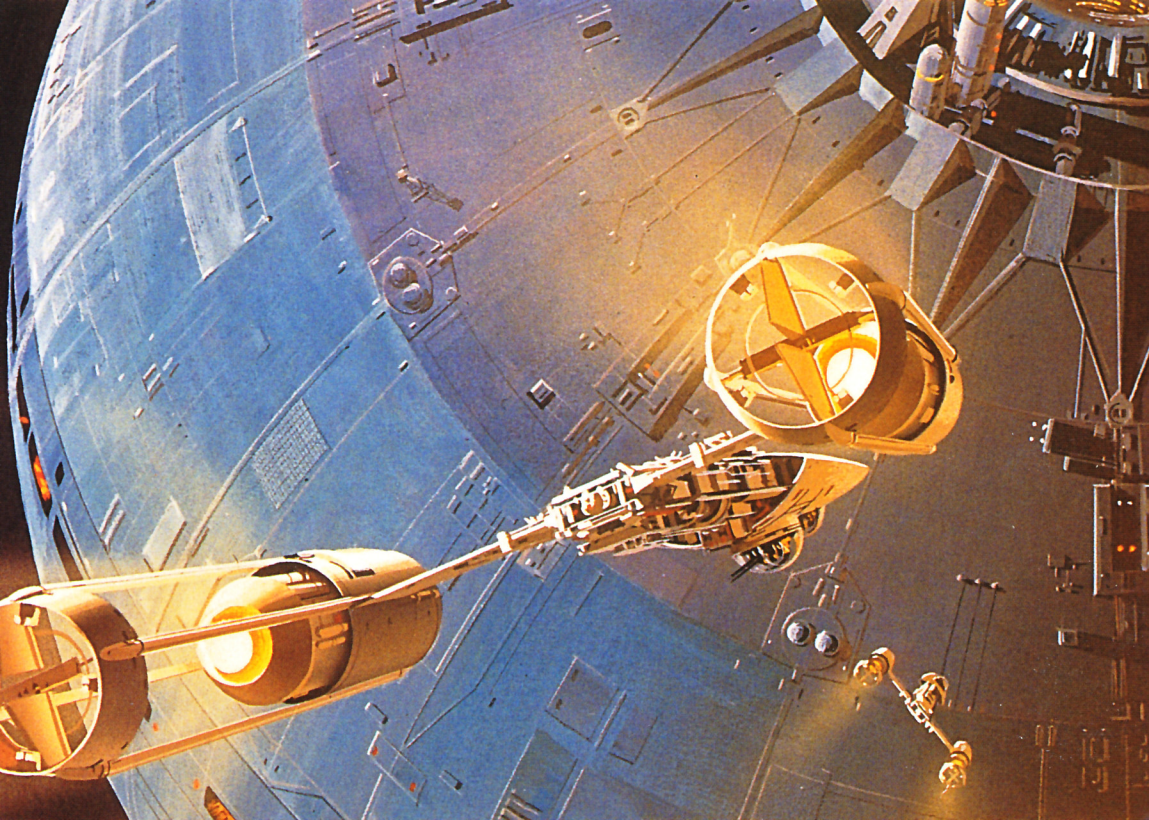




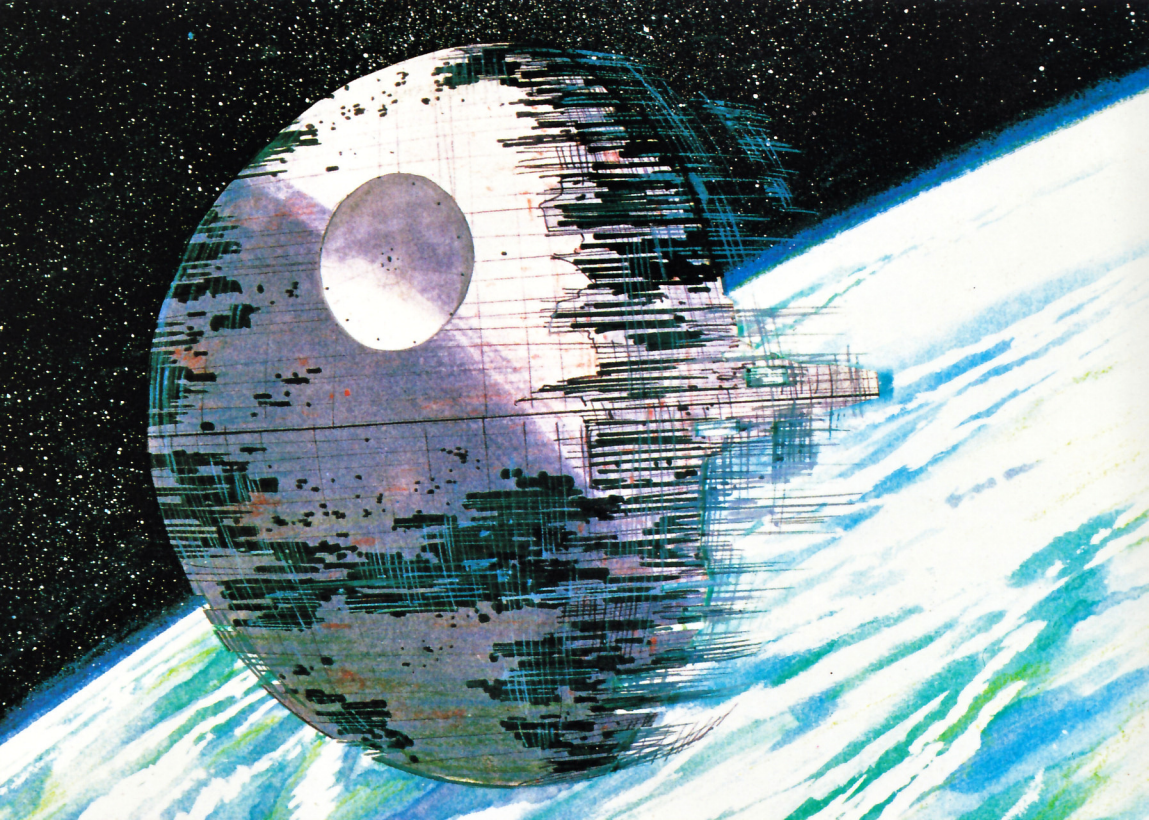












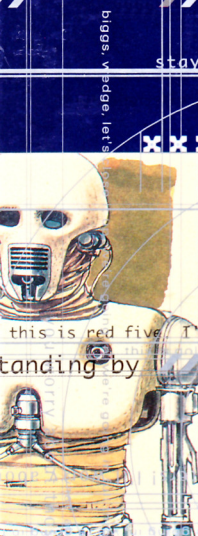


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